

PROPOSED Cherry Grove Erosion Control District – May, 2011

WHAT is it?

An Erosion Control District (ECD) is a special Town taxing district that enables residents to tax themselves to pay for projects that address shoreline erosion.

WHY do it?

We'll need it one day. Like earthquakes in California serious beach erosion is a matter of WHEN, not IF. When the time comes, we must have a district in place so we can repair the damage as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

Other reasons for an ECD include:

Raising funds: ONLY with an ECD will we be able to raise the large funds needed to rebuild our beach, when that becomes necessary.

Help on the Bayside: The ECD can be used to address bayside issues as well, such as replacing bulk-heading on public property.

FEMA reimbursement: Once a community undertakes a beach re-nourishment project, its beach is classified as "engineered." Thus it can qualify for disaster assistance from FEMA if a subsequent storm causes severe erosion damage. The ECD is the mechanism that allows FEMA re-imbusement to the community.

Tax benefit: As a line item on your Brookhaven Town tax bill, ECD taxes will be deductible from your Federal Income Tax.

HOW MUCH will it COST?

Actual beach rebuilding costs can only be known once damage has occurred. We know it will be significant.

Until that time, our ECD will fund our portion of the Nat'l Seashore Environmental Impact Study that will allow beach rebuilding for the next 25-30 years.

Anticipated annual tax revenue: \$15-20,000 per year. Average of \$62 per house, per year.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

Q. We've never needed this before . . . why now?

A. It's been a long time since we've had major damage; you could say we're about due. The ocean environment HAS changed; sea level rise is a fact. We are more vulnerable than ever. An ECD will help protect our beach, community & property values. Plus the Seashore now requires more extensive (and costly) environmental impact studies before any work can start.

Q. Doesn't the Dune Fund provide the protection we need?

A. The Dune Fund handles smaller-cost projects: snow fencing, signage, beach grass fertilization. It will continue to perform these jobs. The ECD is designed to concentrate on big-ticket costs that the Dune Fund cannot cover.

Q. At this point, creating an ECD seems like an insurance policy expense covering a future, possible event, doesn't it?

A. It IS insurance against a clear risk. And most people carry home fire insurance although they rarely experience a fire. But would you do without it?

Q. Are we getting the most economical "insurance"?

A. By joining with the 16 other F.I. communities for future beach renourishment projects, we'll pay at a lower rate because the costs are spread across the entire group. Doing it later, on our own, would cost much, much more.

Q. What about FEMA reimbursement?

A. FEMA reimbursement is available to repair damage cause by a storm event severe enough to trigger a Federal Disaster Declaration. These funds are only available, however, to "engineered" beaches to which sand has already been added. Once rebuilt, the beach qualifies for any future storm-related FEMA assistance.

Q. We already pay plenty of taxes. Why should we approve additional taxes?

A. The ECD tax revenues directly & solely benefit the Grove. Our Dock District taxes work in the same way. Compare this with items like the Brookhaven school tax, which provides very limited benefit to our community

WHO CONTROLS spending?

The Cherry Grove community will control ECD spending because we will be involved in preparing the annual budget.

The petition to establish the ECD includes a maximum amount that can be raised annually through taxes. Annual tax revenues can be less than the maximum, never more. And if tax revenues are not spent in one year they carry over to the next. Funds cannot be transferred to other Brookhaven town expense centers.

In the future when significant funds are needed to rebuild the beach, Grove property taxpayers would have to file a new petition with the Town approving the increased amount.